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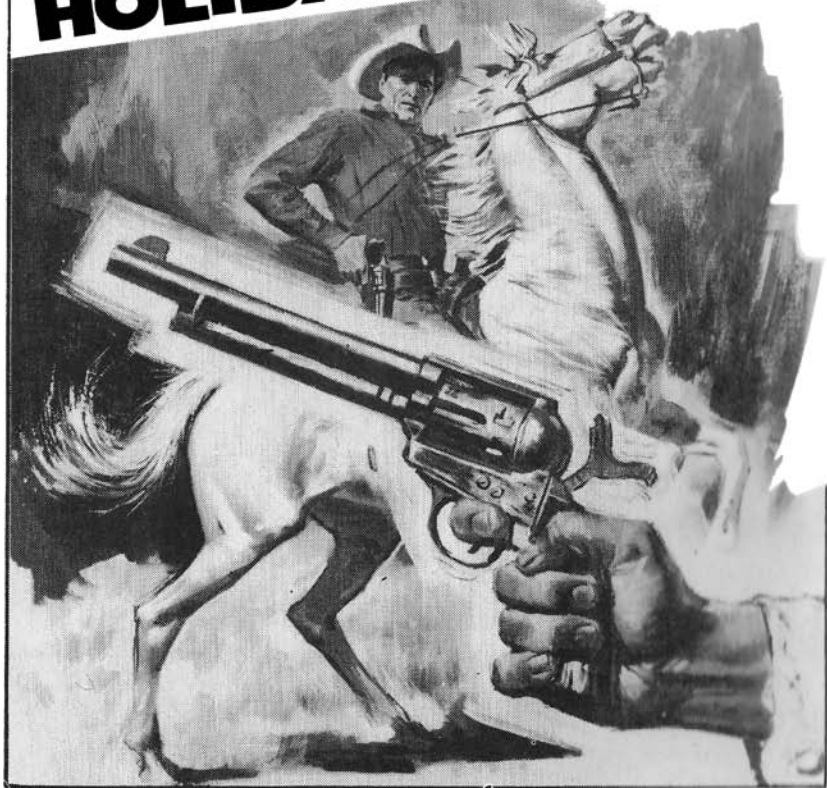
ALSO ON SALE NOW...

Wild West

50p

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HOLIDAY SPECIAL



192 PAGES OF QUICK-FIRE ACTION

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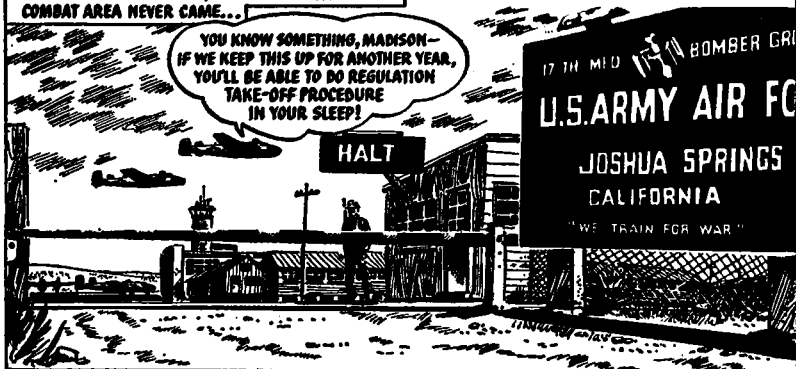
HAVING CARRIED OFF THEIR DARING SURPRISE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR IN DECEMBER 1941, THE JAPANESE WAR LORDS PUT THEIR INVASION PLANS INTO TOP GEAR. INDO-CHINA, SIAM, THE MALAY PENINSULA, SUMATRA, BORNEO, JAVA, NEW GUINEA, THE PHILIPPINES AND A HOST OF ISLANDS IN THE PACIFIC HAD BEEN INVADDED BY JAPANESE TROOPS, AND IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1942 IT LOOKED AS THOUGH NOTHING COULD STOP THE

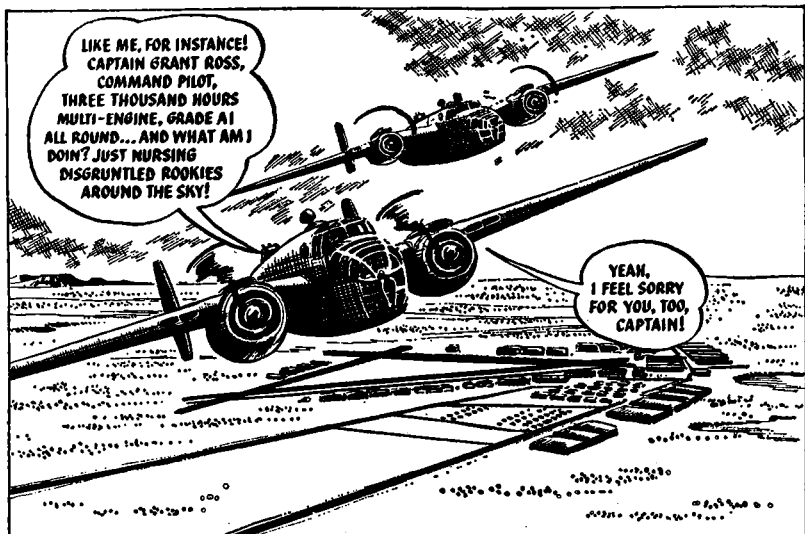
SWARMING SOLDIERS OF NIPPON...



Chapter 1. SCHOOL FOR WAR

FOR OVER A YEAR THE AIR CREWS OF THE 17TH MEDIUM BOMBER GROUP, JOSHUA SPRINGS BASE, CALIFORNIA, HAD BEEN IN TRAINING. WITH THE WAR AT SUCH A CRITICAL STAGE FOR THE ALLIES, THE CREWS WERE EAGER TO GO INTO ACTION, BUT THE POSTING TO A COMBAT AREA NEVER CAME...

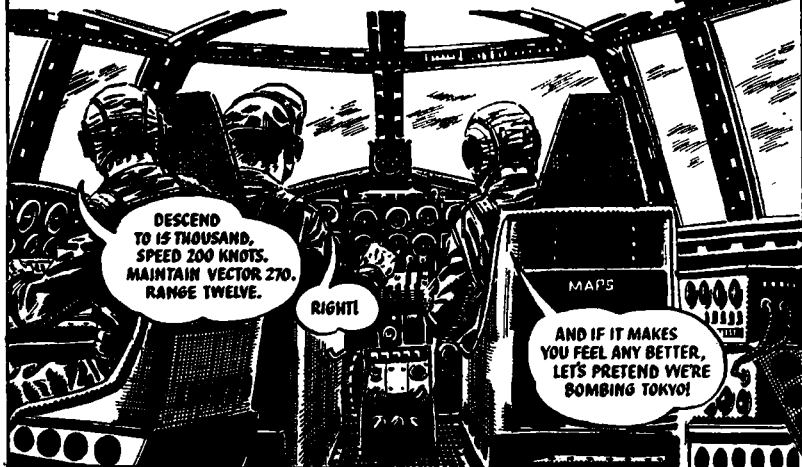




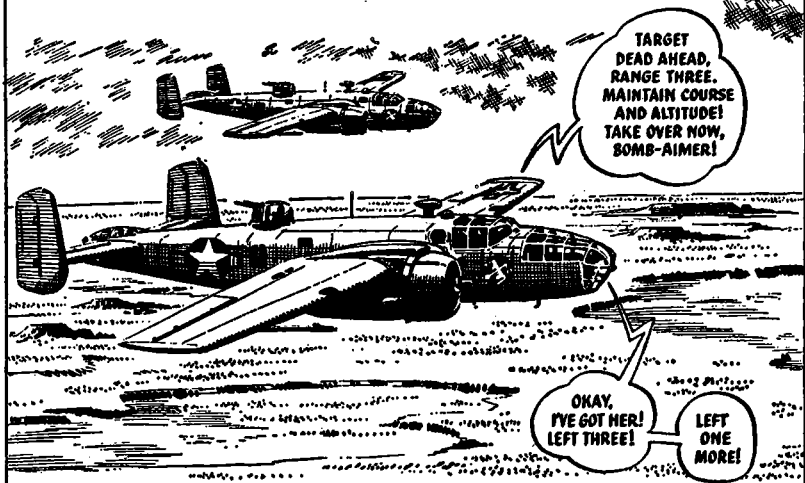
FOR THE TENTH TIME IN A MONTH, LIEUTENANT CLIVE MADISON WAS GOING OUT ON A BOMBING TEST OVER THE CALIFORNIA DESERT. IN EVERY BOMBING TEST HE HAD TAKEN HIS SCORE WAS WELL ABOVE AVERAGE, BUT THEY STILL CONTINUED...



SOON THE MITCHELL BOMBERS WERE NEARING THE TARGET AREA AND THE NAVIGATOR TOOK OVER COMMAND OF THE AIRCRAFT, CAPTAIN ROSS, THE BOMBING INSTRUCTOR, KEPT A LAZY EYE ON PROCEEDINGS...



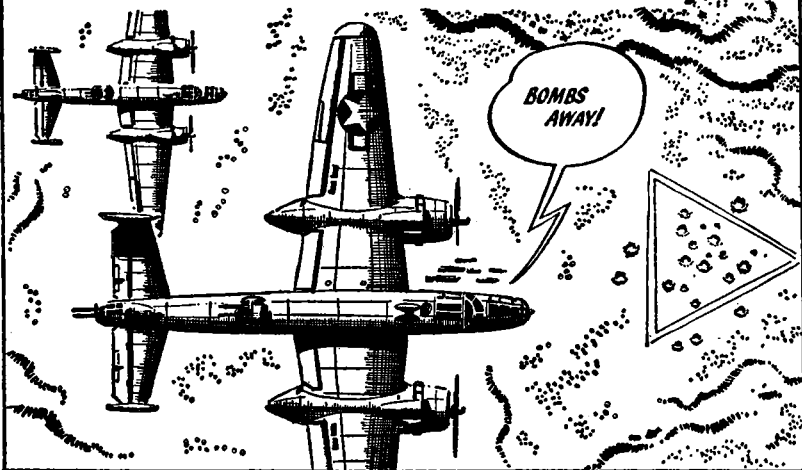
THE NAVIGATOR'S VOICE IN MADISON'S EARPHONES BROKE HIS TRAIN OF THOUGHT. HE WAS RECALLED TO REALITY, TO THE CALIFORNIA DESERT, TO TRAINING, TRAINING, TRAINING...



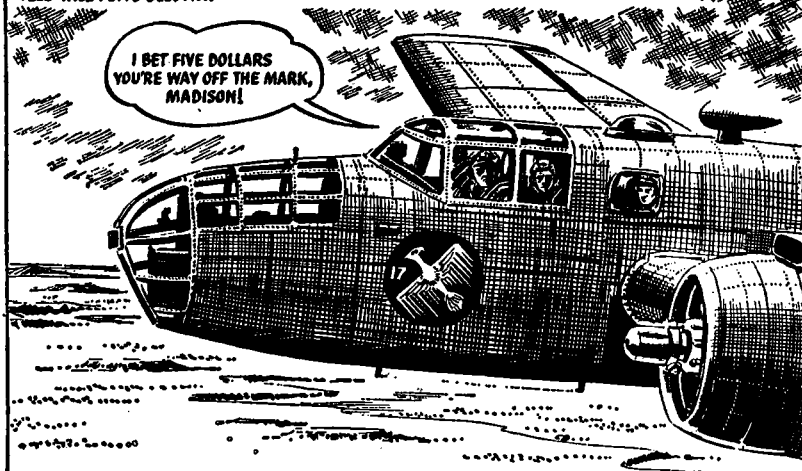
A HUGE TRIANGLE FORMED THE TARGET ON THE DESERT BELOW. AN OBSERVATION TEAM SUPERVISED THE BOMBING ACCURACY FROM A GROUND STATION IN THE TARGET AREA, AND THE MONITORS WERE EXPECTING THE FIRST "RAID"...



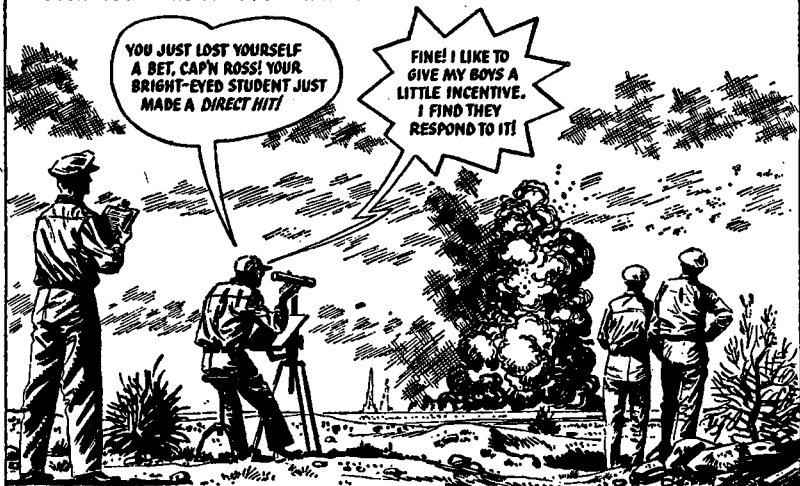
DEAD ON TIME, AND WITH SPEED, TRACK AND ALTITUDE SUPERBLY CO-ORDINATED, THE MITCHELLS FROM JOSHUA SPRINGS SPED ON THE LAST SECONDS OF THEIR BOMBING RUNS...



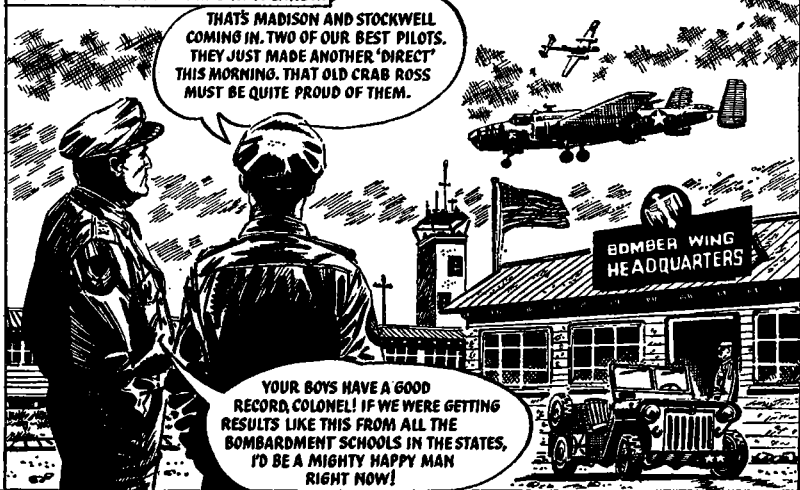
SUDDENLY BUCKING INTO LIFE HAVING RELEASED THEIR MASSIVE LOADS, THE BOMBERS ROARED UP AND AWAY IN A WIDE CIRCLE, THEIR CREWS ANXIOUSLY SCANNING THE GROUND FOR THE TELL-TALE PUFFS BELOW...



SCREAMING DOWN FROM THEIR LOFTY PERCH, THE BOMBS WEAVED THROUGH THE HOT DESERT AIR AND PLUNGED INTO THE ANCIENT DUST FAR BELOW...



FEELING A LITTLE PROUD, MADISON CALLED FOR A VECTOR BACK TO BASE, AND IN JUST OVER AN HOUR, THE BOMBERS WERE COMING IN TO LAND...



THE MITCHELLS LANDED AND TAXIED TO THE PARKING APRON. AS LIEUTENANTS MADISON AND STOCKWELL CLIMBED OUT OF THEIR AIRCRAFT THE GROUND CREWS JOKED WITH THEM...

HIYA, CHAMPS!
THE BASE COMMANDER
JUST GOT AN APPLICATION
FROM TJOJ TO BUY YOU GUYS
FOR THE JAP AIR FORCE!

TELL HIM MADISON REGRETS,
BUT IF I'M NOT TOO OLD AND BEAT UP
AFTER ALL THIS TRAINING I MAY
SEE HIM OVER TOKYO SOME DAY
... MAYBE!

AND THAT
GOES FOR
ME, TOO!

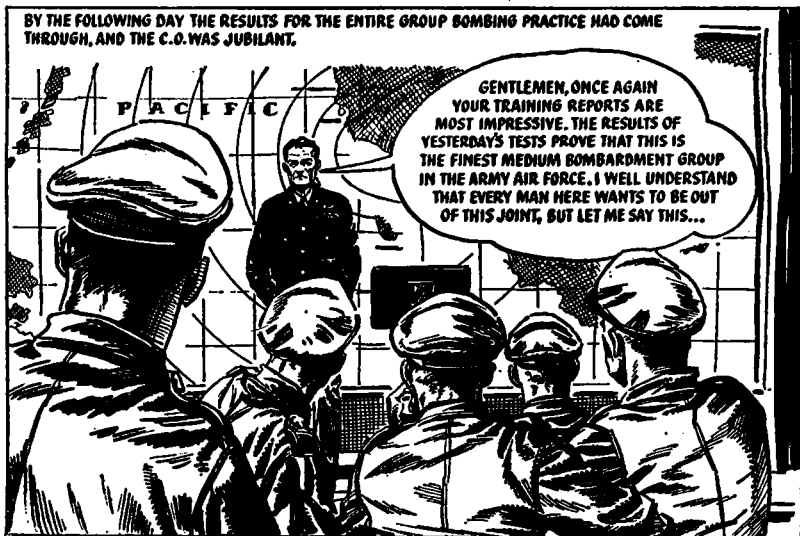
BUT BENEATH ALL THE JOKING, A REAL FEELING OF WASTE AND FRUSTRATION WAS GROWING AMONG THE CREWS. ALTHOUGH MORALE WAS HIGH AND RESULTS WERE GOOD, THE MEN WERE EAGER TO GET INTO ACTION...

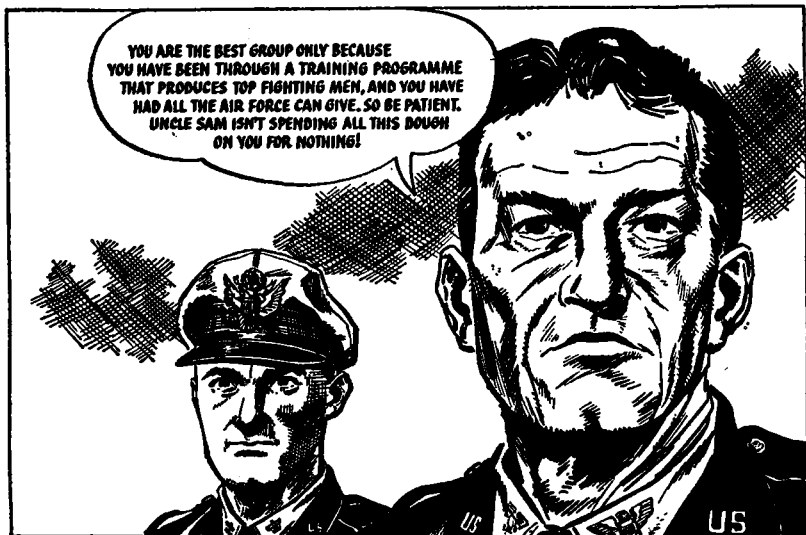
YOU KNOW, CAP'N ROSS,
I FEEL LIKE A FIGHTER.
ALL TRAINED UP FOR A TOUGH SCRAP
AND WANTING TO GET IT OVER WITH.
I JUST WANT TO HEAR THE FIRST BELL
AND GET IN THERE AND DO SOMETHING!
DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

I UNDERSTAND YOU, KID!
...AND SO DO THE BIG SHOTS
UP AT THE PENTAGON.
YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE,
AND WHEN YOU DO, YOU'LL BE
THANKFUL FOR ALL THIS
TRAINING, BELIEVE ME!



BY THE FOLLOWING DAY THE RESULTS FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP BOMBING PRACTICE HAD COME THROUGH, AND THE C.O. WAS JUBILANT.





A DARING PLAN TO INFLICT A REVERSE UPON THE ENEMY HAD SUGGESTED ITSELF TO THE MIND OF A CERTAIN NAVY ADMIRAL. A SELECT GROUP OF FOUR MEN, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO KNEW OF THE PLAN. ONE MORE OFFICER WAS CALLED IN...

DOOLITTLE, YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT AIRCRAFT, WELL FIGURE THIS ONE OUT. I WANT AN AIRCRAFT THAT CAN FLY TWO THOUSAND MILES WITH TWO THOUSAND POUNDS OF BOMBS... AND CAPABLE OF TAKE-OFF IN A MAXIMUM OF FIVE HUNDRED FEET! ANY IDEAS?

CAN'T SAY I HAVE RIGHT NOW, BUT I'LL WORK ON IT, ADMIRAL!

COLONEL JIMMY DOOLITTLE HAD LISTENED TO THE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE SPECIFICATION WITHOUT TURNING A HAIR! TO A LESSER MAN THE ANSWER WOULD HAVE BEEN A QUICK 'NO,' BUT TO THIS COLONEL THE IMPOSSIBLE DIDN'T EXIST!

THE B-26 IS RULED OUT! LOOKS AS IF THE B-25 IS THE ONLY ONE WITH A CHANCE. I'LL PREPARE A REPORT FOR THE ADMIRAL.

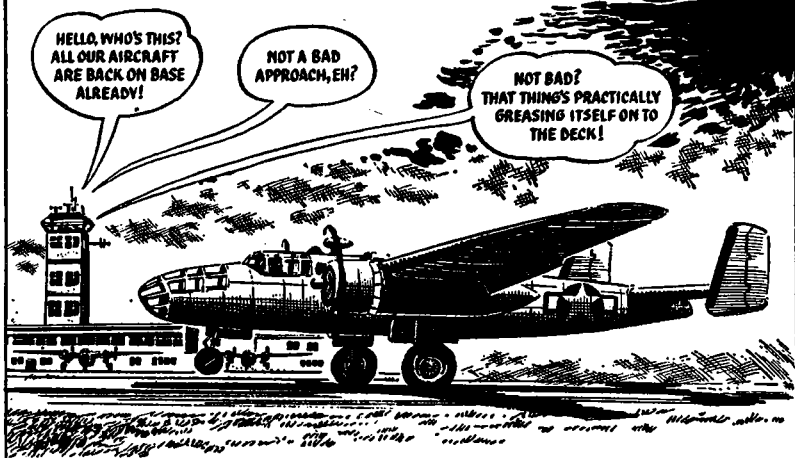
COLONEL DOOLITTLE PUT FORWARD HIS CALCULATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS. SOON HE AND THE AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERS WERE AT WORK ON A B-25 MITCHELL BOMBER AT A SPECIAL AIRFIELD...



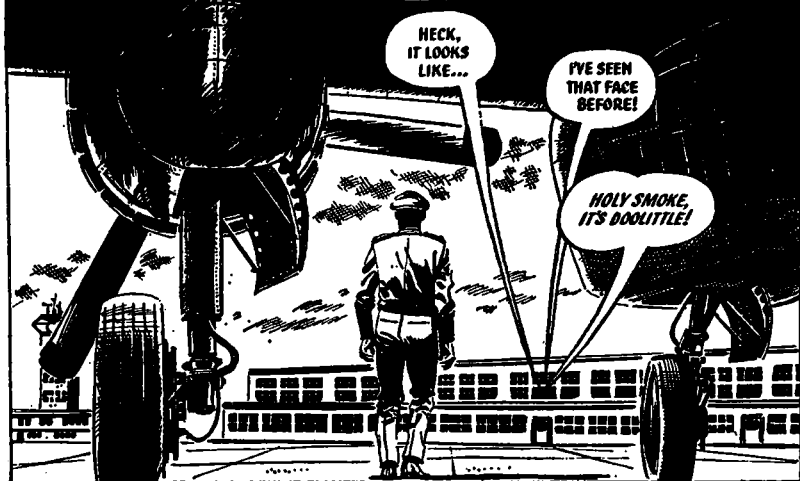
THE PERSONNEL AT THE SPECIAL MODIFICATIONS BASE WERE USED TO STARTLING EXPERIMENTS, BUT WHEN THEY SAW COLONEL DOOLITTLE APPARENTLY TRYING TO COMMIT SUICIDE IN A MITCHELL BOMBER EVEN THEY GOT WORRIED!



AFTER TWO WEEKS OF TRIALS THE COLONEL SATISFIED HIMSELF THAT THE B25 COULD SERVE THE SPECIAL PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS REQUIRED, AND IN EARLY FEBRUARY, 1942, THE PILOTS AT JOSHUA SPRINGS WERE SURPRISED WHEN A STRANGE MITCHELL BOMBER CAME IN TO LAND...



AS THE BOMBER TAXIED GRACEFULLY AROUND THE PERIMETER TRACK AND ITS ENGINES CUT OUT, THE CREWS GASPED AS THEY SAW WHO CLIMBED OUT OF IT...



Chapter 2. TOP SECRET OPERATION

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FAMOUS COLONEL AT THE BASE TOLD THE AIRCREWS THAT SOMETHING WAS FINALLY ON THE MOVE, *BUT WHAT?* THE BASE COMMANDER HIMSELF DID NOT KNOW THE ANSWER...



LISTS WERE POSTED UP AND THERE WAS A 100 PER CENT RESPONSE! AS FAR AS THE CREWS WERE CONCERNED, ANYTHING WAS BETTER THAN HANGING AROUND, AND THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING BIG, AS CAPTAIN ROSS REMARKED TO MADISON AND STOCKWELL...

BEING AN INSTRUCTOR, I'M NOT ALLOWED TO PUT MY NAME UP, BUT YOU GUYS ARE RIGHT IN IT NOW! DOOLITTLE DOESN'T FOOL AROUND YUTH SMALL-TIME OPERATIONS!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS? A BIG OFFENSIVE IN THE PACIFIC, OR EUROPE, OR WHAT?

IF I DID KNOW DO YOU THINK I'D TELL YOU? BUT WHILE YOU GUYS ARE GATHERING THE GLORY THINK OF OLD LEATHERFACE TRAINING A NEW LOT OF GOONS BACK HERE!

SOON DOOLITTLE HIMSELF WAS ADDRESSING THE CREWS. HE WAS PROVING PRETTY EVASIVE ABOUT THE OPERATION, TOO. THE NEED FOR ABSOLUTE SECRECY WAS CONTINUALLY STRESSED...

YOU GUYS WILL BE POSTED FOR LAST MINUTE TRAINING TOMORROW. THE NAVY ARE GOING TO SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO, MAINLY HOW TO TAKE A MITCHELL B-25 OFF THE GROUND IN 500 FEET. ANY QUESTIONS?

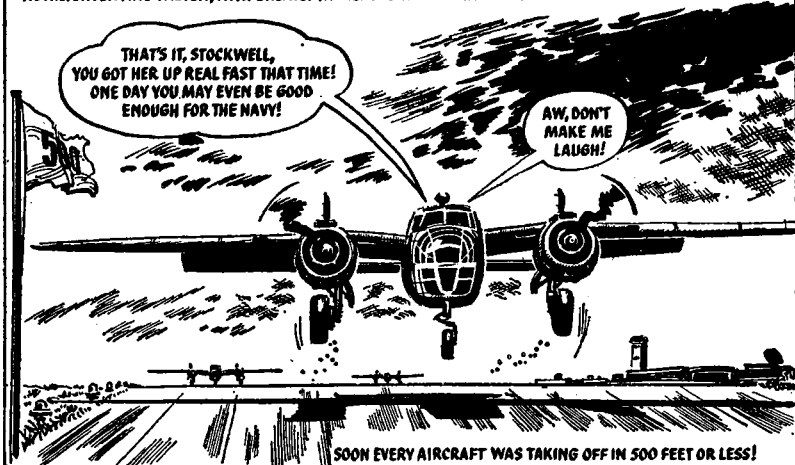
DID... DID YOU SAY 500 FEET, COLONEL?

THAT'S RIGHT, CAPTAIN, 500 FEET. IT'S POSSIBLE. I'VE DONE IT! ANYTHING ELSE?

THAT WASN'T THE PLAN...NOT QUITE! THE EXTRA FUEL TANKS HOUSED 320 GALLONS MORE THAN A STANDARD B-25, AND WITH CREW COMMUNICATION RADIOS AND ALL OTHER 'FANCY' DEVICES REMOVED, THE BOMBER WAS NOW LIGHTER AND FASTER, WITH GREATLY INCREASED RANGE. TAKE-OFF PROCEDURE CONTINUED...

THAT'S IT, STOCKWELL,
YOU GOT HER UP REAL FAST THAT TIME!
ONE DAY YOU MAY EVEN BE GOOD
ENOUGH FOR THE NAVY!

AW, DON'T
MAKE ME
LAUGH!



SOON EVERY AIRCRAFT WAS TAKING OFF IN 500 FEET OR LESS!

AFTER ALL THIS TRAINING WITH THE NAVY IT WAS BECOMING OBVIOUS THAT THE 500-FOOT TAKE-OFF MEANT THAT THE BOMBERS WERE TO BE LAUNCHED FROM AIRCRAFT CARRIERS! EVERY AIRCRAFT WAS PERSONALLY TESTED BY DOOLITTLE...

SON, I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS
AIRCRAFT WAS IN TOP SHAPE!
I JUST TOOK HER UP. GET THIS
LIST OF DEFECTS SEEN TO,
AND FAST!

YES SIR!



DOOLITTLE DEMANDED PERFECTION, AND HE GOT IT!

WITHIN THREE WEEKS ALL THE WORK ON THE AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN COMPLETED, AND THE CREWS REALISED THAT THEY WOULD SOON BE ON THEIR WAY, TO WHEREVER THEY WERE GOING!

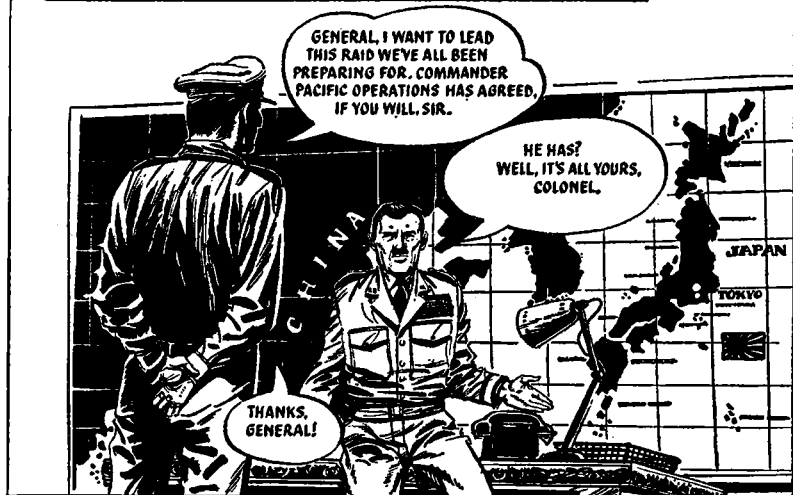


FINAL PREPARATIONS WERE COMPLETED. AS FAR AS DOOLITTLE WAS CONCERNED, ONLY ONE THING REMAINED TO BE DONE. HE WANTED TO GET HIMSELF IN AS LEADER OF THE RAID...





THE COLONEL HURRIED DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF!

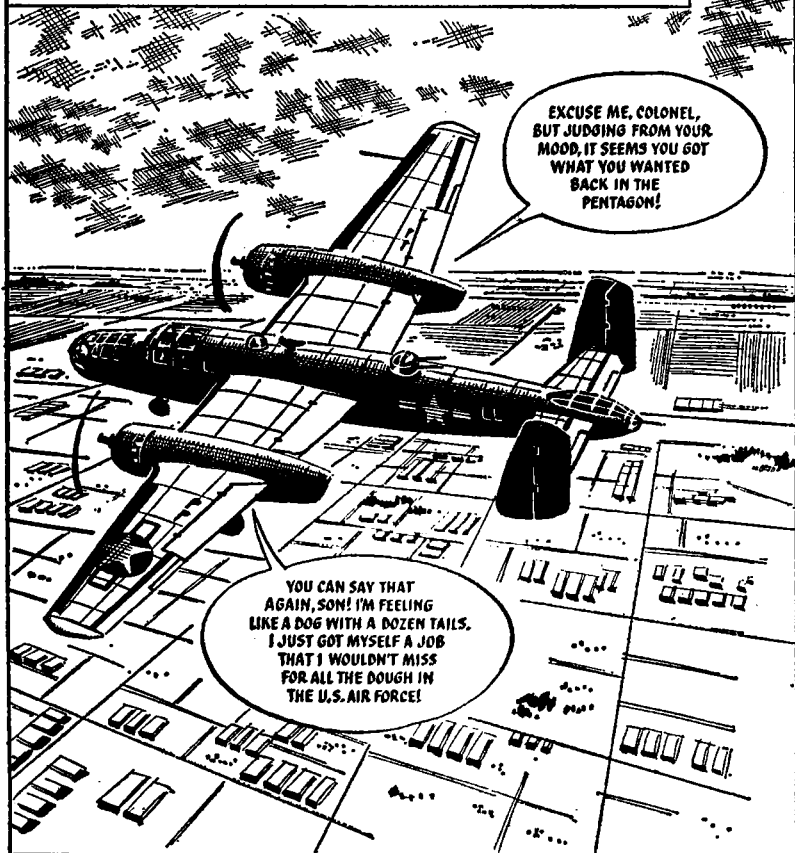


AS DOOLITTLE LEFT HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON TWO HIGH-RANKING GENERALS WERE A LITTLE CONFUSED AS TO WHO HAD ACTUALLY GIVEN PERMISSION FOR DOOLITTLE TO LEAD A RAID ON JAPAN!



Chapter 3. A STEP IN THE DARK

AS YET EVEN THE MOST HOPEFUL OF THE PILOTS OF THE 17TH GROUP NEVER DREAMED THAT JAPAN WAS TO BE THE TARGET! ONLY THE FINAL DETAILS OF THE PLAN TO BOMB TOKYO BY MEANS OF A CARRIER-BORNE FORCE REMAINED TO BE WORKED OUT, AND DOOLITTLE WAS IMPATIENT TO START...





AS SOON AS THE AIRCRAFT CAME TO A HALT, DOOLITTLE BUSTLED OUT AND WALKED BRISKLY
OVER TO THE COMMANDER'S OFFICE, ISSUING ORDERS AS HE WENT...



DOOLITTLE'S PASSION FOR EFFICIENCY WAS ALREADY LEGENDARY IN THE AIR FORCE, AND EVERYBODY WAS DISCOVERING THAT THE COLONEL'S STANDARDS WERE NOT THOSE OF THE AVERAGE FLYING STATION. HE WANTED EVERYTHING AT THE DOUBLE!



MEANWHILE IN THE COMMANDER'S OFFICE, DOOLITTLE WAS GIVING FINAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CREWS...



HALF AN HOUR LATER DOOLITTLE WAS TAKING OFF AGAIN, AND THE PORT ENGINE WAS IN PERFECT SHAPE! THE CREW SERGEANT LOOKED RUEFULLY AFTER THE MITCHELL AS IT CLIMBED AWAY INTO THE SUNSHINE...

I ALWAYS DID SAY THAT IT'S THE GUYS TOO OLD TO FIGHT WHO MAKE THE BIGGEST NOISE IN THIS OUTFIT!

THAT GUY'S FORGOTTEN MORE ABOUT FIGHTING THAN ANY KID WILL EVER LEARN. THERE GOES A REGULAR FLYER, SON. THE TROUBLE WITH YOU IS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT WORK MEANS!

AS DOOLITTLE NEARED SAN FRANCISCO FOR FINAL INTERVIEW WITH NAVY CHIEFS, THE GIANT CARRIER 'HORNET' STEAMED INTO THE BAY. HER CAPTAIN HAD BEEN SUMMONED FOR A SPECIAL MISSION...

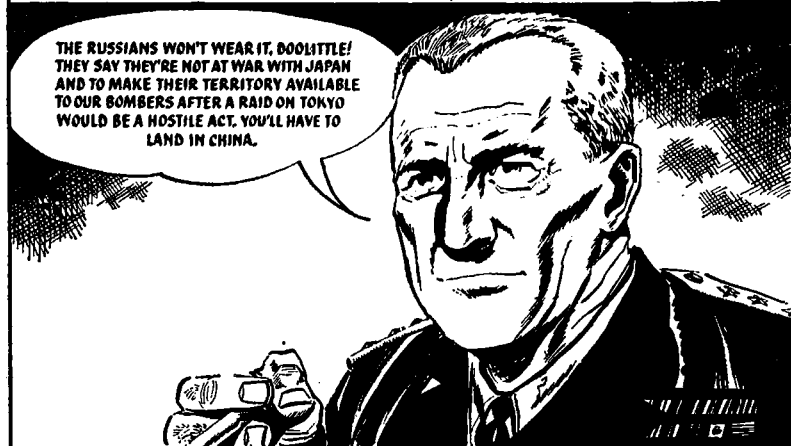
WHAT DO YOU THINK ALL THIS IS ABOUT, CAPTAIN?

CAN'T SAY, BUT ADMIRAL HALSEY IS WAITING THERE IN FRISCO TO GREET US, SO I RECKON IT'S SOMETHING BIG!

ADMIRAL HALSEY HAD ARRANGED A FINAL MEETING WITH DOOLITTLE IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND OF ALL PLACES TO DISCUSS A TOP SECRET OPERATION, HE CHOSE THE BAR OF AN HOTEL!

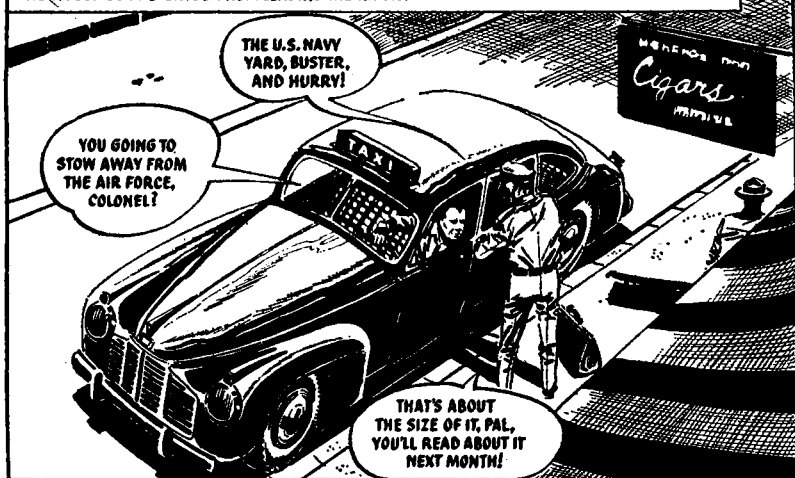


THE ORIGINAL PLAN WAS THAT THE MITCHELLS WOULD TAKE OFF FROM THE 'HORNET' OFF THE COAST OF JAPAN, BOMB THE TARGETS, AND THEN FLY ON TO VLADIVOSTOK IN RUSSIA, A DISTANCE OF 600 MILES FROM TOKYO.





AS DOOLITTLE WALKED ALONE THROUGH THE DARK SAN FRANCISCO STREETS, HE WAS HAUNTED BY THE FEAR THAT HIS BLUFF AT THE PENTAGON TWO DAYS EARLIER WOULD BE CALLED, AND THAT HE WOULD BE PREVENTED FROM LEADING THE RAID...



HALF AN HOUR LATER DOOLITTLE WAS ABOARD THE CARRIER 'HORNET'. HER CAPTAIN, 'PETE' MITSCHER WAS ALREADY IN THE PICTURE, AND HIS OWN ENTHUSIASM FOR THE TASK AHEAD WAS ONLY MATCHED BY DOOLITTLE'S...



WE'LL HAVE THE CARRIER
'ENTERPRISE' WITH US, PLUS TWO
HEAVY CRUISERS, TWO LIGHT CRUISERS,
EIGHT DESTROYERS AND TWO TANKERS.
WE'LL STEAM AHEAD OF THE TASK FORCE
WHEN YOU GUYS TAKE OFF, AND THEN
PULL OUT, *BUT FAST!*

SURE! WE'LL THE BOYS ARE
WAITING DOWN AT ALMEDA
NAVAL STATION. LET'S GET DOWN
THERE AND TAKE THE
PLANES ABOARD.

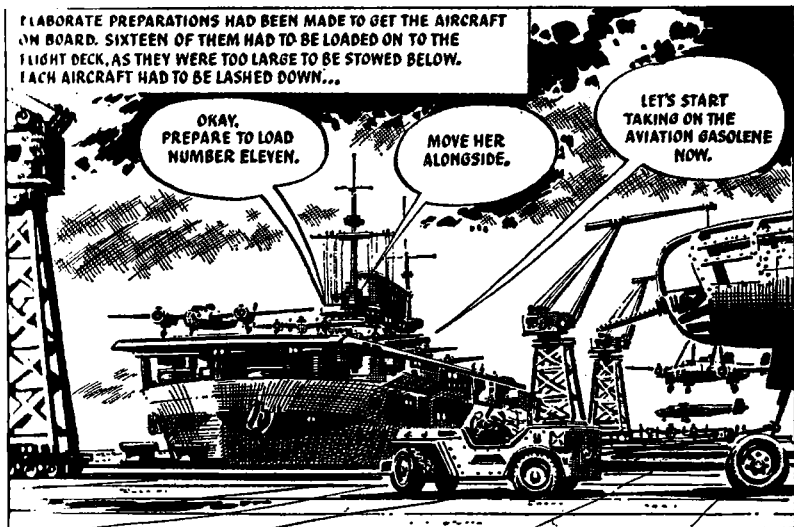


ELABORATE PREPARATIONS HAD BEEN MADE TO GET THE AIRCRAFT
ON BOARD. SIXTEEN OF THEM HAD TO BE LOADED ON TO THE
FLIGHT DECK, AS THEY WERE TOO LARGE TO BE STOWED BELOW.
EACH AIRCRAFT HAD TO BE LASHED DOWN...

OKAY,
PREPARE TO LOAD
NUMBER ELEVEN.

MOVE HER
ALONGSIDE.

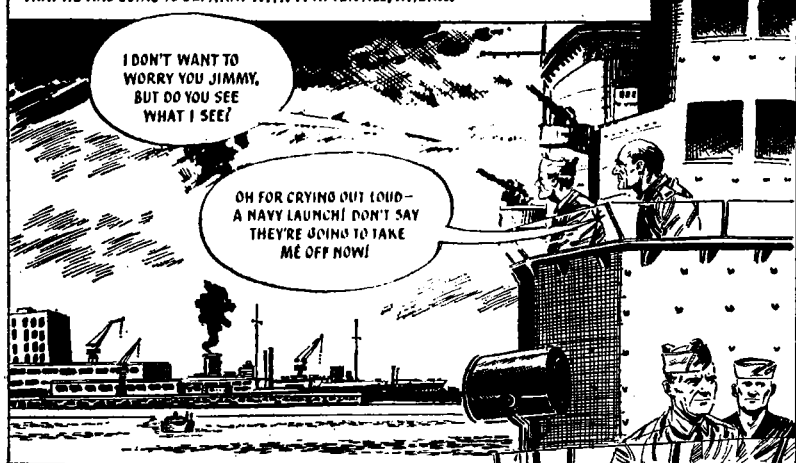
LET'S START
TAKING ON THE
AVIATION GASOLINE
NOW.



THE CREWS OF THE 17TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP WATCHED WITH GREAT SATISFACTION. THE REASON FOR THE SHORT TAKE-OFF PRACTICE NOW BECAME CLEAR, BUT THE TARGET WAS STILL A SECRET...



TWELVE HOURS LATER THE 'HORNET' WAS STEAMING OUT TO SEA ON THE FIRST STAGE OF THE LONG JOURNEY INTO JAPANESE WATERS. COLONEL DOOLITTLE WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL THAT HE WAS GOING TO GET AWAY WITH IT AFTER ALL, WHEN...





A LIVID COLONEL STALKED THROUGH THE NAVAL STATION AND ANGRILY PICKED UP THE
WAITING TELEPHONE. WITH DOOLITTLE IN THIS MOOD, ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN, EVEN
TO AN ADMIRAL!

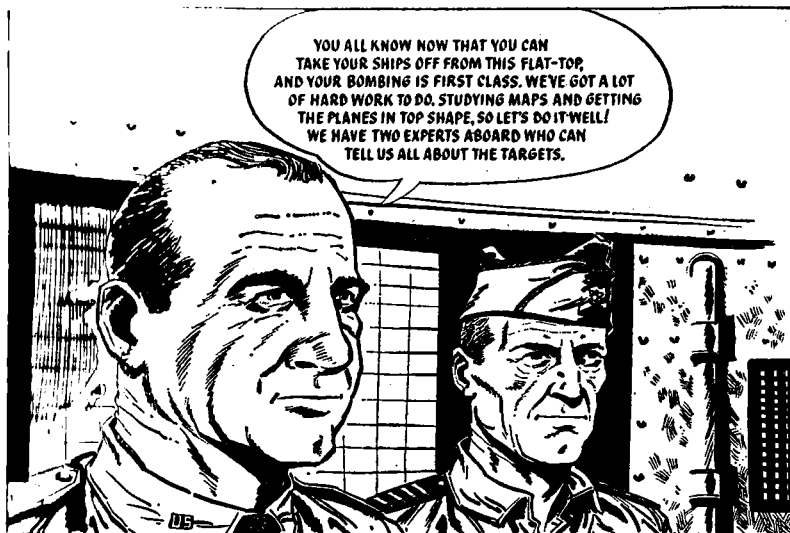


DOOLITTLE, MUCH RELIEVED, AND FEELING ON TOP OF THE WORLD, WAS RETURNED TO THE 'HORNET'. AND AS HE LEFT THE LAUNCH, HE TURNED SMILINGLY TO THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT...

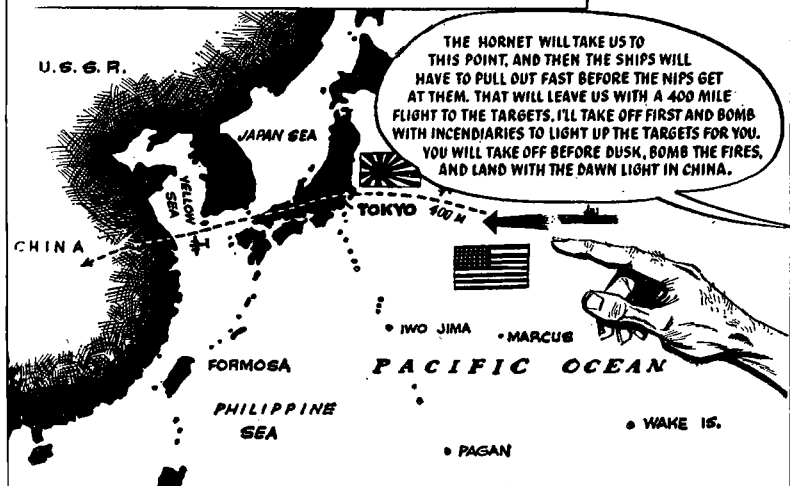


BY EVENING, THE HORNET WAS STEAMING AHEAD TO MEET UP WITH THE TASK FORCE, AND THE TIME HAD COME TO PUT THE CREWS IN THE PICTURE...





PRECISE DETAILS OF THE PLAN OF ATTACK WERE TOLD FOR THE FIRST TIME...



IT WAS QUITE OBVIOUS TO EVERYBODY THAT DOOLITTLE HAD PICKED THE TOUGHEST JOB. HE WOULD HAVE TO FIND THE TARGETS AT NIGHT, AND THEN DIVERT TO CHINA AND LAND IN DARKNESS ON THE CRUDE FIELDS IN NORTH CHINA!

OF COURSE, EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON OUR GETTING TO WITHIN 400 MILES OF JAPAN WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED. I CAN'T OVER-ESTIMATE THE RISK THAT THE CAPTAIN HERE IS TAKING FOR US, AND THAT GOES FOR ALL THE NAVY BOYS.

IF WE'RE ATTACKED BEFORE LAUNCHING, THE PLANES GO OVER THE SIDE, AND WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT, BUT LET'S HOPE THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN! OUR FIGHTER PLANES WILL HAVE A CLEAR DECK TO TAKE OFF IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK.

BRIEFING ROOM
EXIT

IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, DOOLITTLE'S MAIN CONCERN WAS TO KEEP THE MEN FULLY OCCUPIED. NONE HAD BEEN IN COMBAT BEFORE, AND MORALE HAD TO BE KEPT HIGH. FREQUENT TARGET PRACTICE WAS ORDERED...

THE JAPS HAVEN'T GOT ANY NIGHT FIGHTERS, BUT YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MUCH FIRING PRACTICE. EACH GUNNER WILL FIRE 200 ROUNDS.

EVERY SPARE HOUR WAS DEVOTED TO STUDYING MAPS AND CHARTS, AND CHECKING GUNS, BOMB SIGHTS AND ENGINES OVER AND OVER AGAIN. AS THE DAYS WENT BY, THE CREWS BEGAN TO REALISE THAT THE MISSION WAS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER...

I WONDER WHAT THE WEATHER WILL BE LIKE WHEN WE TAKE OFF. THE PROSPECT OF TAKING A PLANE OFF FROM THIS FLAT-TOP SCARES ME A BIT. IT'S STUPID, BECAUSE WE'VE DONE IT IN EFFECT, IN TRAINING!

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, DICK, I DREAM ABOUT THE DARNED TAKE OFF. I GUESS IT WILL GO OFF OKAY, BUT IT'S LIVING WITH IT IN FRONT OF YOU THAT GETS ME... BUT LET'S GET BACK TO THIS CHECK LIST!

ALL OF THE AIR CREWS WERE BEGINNING TO HAVE ANXIOUS MOMENTS. IT WAS THE LONG WAITING PERIOD THAT WAS WORRYING THEM. THE PROBLEMS OF THE RAID WERE BEING MAGNIFIED WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, BUT THEY STILL HAD FAITH IN 'THE BOSS'...

THE COLONEL RECKONS THERE'S A FIFTY-FIFTY CHANCE, SO THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME. HE DOESN'T SAY A THING WITHOUT WORKING IT OUT TO THE LAST DETAIL FIRST!

YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN! IF DOOLITTLE SAYS IT CAN BE DONE, THAT'S IT!

IN THE SECOND WEEK IN APRIL, 1942, THE AIRCRAFT ABOARD THE 'HORNET' WERE FULLY ARMED UP AND THE ALERT WAS CALLED. THEY WERE NEARING JAPANESE WATERS, AND THE SEA WAS GETTING ROUGH...

LOOKS BAD, DOESN'T IT, PETE? TAKING OFF IN THIS WILL BE A NIGHTMARE.

YES, IT DOES LOOK BAD. BUT AT LEAST WE'VE COME THIS FAR UNMOLESTED. IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE.

Chapter 4. A CHANGE OF PLAN

BY THE MIDDLE OF APRIL, 1942, THE TASK FORCE WAS SOME 900 MILES OFF THE COAST OF JAPAN. THE WEATHER WAS FOUL, AND THE HUGE SHIPS STAGGERED THROUGH THE HEAVY SEAS AT LOW SPEED. THERE SEEMED TO BE AN OMINOUS MESSAGE IN THE SKIES...

WE'RE ABOUT TWO
AND A HALF DAYS FROM
LAUNCHING POINT, AND ACCORDING
TO THE MET MEN, WE STAND A PRETTY
GOOD CHANCE OF RIDING OUT
THIS STORM WITHIN 24 HOURS.



BUT DOOLITTLE'S RAIDERS DID NOT HAVE 24 HOURS TO WAIT. FAR TO THE WEST, A JAPANESE PATROL SHIP WAS MARAUDING AROUND OUT OF SIGHT OF, AND UNAWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE TASK FORCE...



THE LITTLE SHIP WAS LABOURING THROUGH THE HEAVY SEAS, AND EVERY SAILOR ON BOARD WAS CURSING THE CAPTAIN FOR CONTINUING A FUTILE PATROL IN SUCH WEATHER. THEY SAW NO NEED FOR IT!



SUDDENLY, IN THE TRACKING ROOM OF THE PATROL SHIP, A FAINT BLIP APPEARED ON ONE OF THE RADAR SCREENS...



THE REPORT BROUGHT A SUDDEN EXPLOSION OF BRISK ACTIVITY TO THE BRIDGE OF THE LITTLE SHIP. HER CAPTAIN RAPPELLED OUT ORDERS IN A COOL AND DEADLY FASHION...



FOR A FULL TWENTY MINUTES THE JAPANESE PATROL SHIP OBSERVED THE STRIKE FORCE UNDETECTED, AND A FULL RADIO REPORT WAS MADE TO NAVAL HEADQUARTERS IN JAPAN. THEN SUDDENLY, ABOARD THE 'HORNET'...



THE DRASTIC NEWS WAS SIGNALLED TO THE 'ENTERPRISE', AND IN A FEW MOMENTS THE REPLY CAME BACK. THE TASK FORCE WAS 800 MILES OFF THE COAST OF JAPAN, AND DOOLITTLE KNEW THAT IT WAS NOW OR NEVER...



THE WORST HAD HAPPENED! HAVING BEEN SIGHTED BY THE JAPANESE SHIP, THE BOMBER CREWS WOULD HAVE TO TAKE OFF IMMEDIATELY, WITH AN EXTRA 400 MILES ADDED ON TO THEIR JOURNEY, AND THE SHIPS WOULD HAVE TO GET OUT FAST...

POSITION THE BOMBERS FOR TAKE OFF. ALL CREWS REPORT FOR FINAL BRIEFING.

IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT ALREADY BOMBERS HAD TAKEN OFF FROM JAPAN TO ENGAGE THE TASK FORCE!

DOOLITTLE HURRIEDLY ADDRESSED THE CREWS...

WELL, FELLERS, IT'S GOING TO BE AN EARLY TAKE OFF. SORRY AND ALL THAT! WE'VE GOT A FEW MORE MILES TO COVER, BUT WE'LL MAKE IT OKAY. THE DECK IS PITCHING A BIT, SO START ROLLING WHEN THE BOW GOES DOWN, THEN YOU SHOULD COME OFF WHEN SHE'S LEVELLING OUT. I'LL GIVE YOU A DEMONSTRATION, AND YOU GUYS FOLLOW SUIT.....

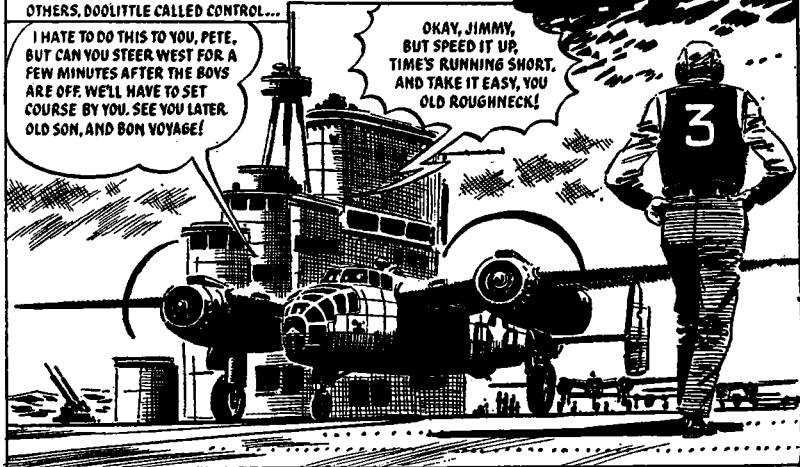
ONE OTHER THING, I'VE GIVEN YOU 50 EXTRA GALLONS OF GAS IN 5 GALLON TINS, SO TOP UP YOUR TANKS ON THE WAY. DON'T DROP THE CANS THOUGH, WE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE A TRAIL BACK TO THE TASK FORCE. AND FINALLY, FOR US ALL, I WANT TO SAY THANKS TO CAPTAIN MITSCHER HERE FOR STICKING HIS NECK OUT FOR US. THE NAVY HAS BEEN GREAT TO US!



AFTER FINAL GOOD WISHES, COLONEL DOOLITTLE AND HIS CREW CLIMBED ABOARD THEIR MITCHELL, WHICH WAS ALREADY IN POSITION AND WARMING UP ON DECK. ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE DIFFICULTY OF OTHERS, DOOLITTLE CALLED CONTROL....

I HATE TO DO THIS TO YOU, PETE, BUT CAN YOU STEER WEST FOR A FEW MINUTES AFTER THE BOYS ARE OFF. WE'LL HAVE TO SET COURSE BY YOU. SEE YOU LATER. OLD SON, AND BON VOYAGE!

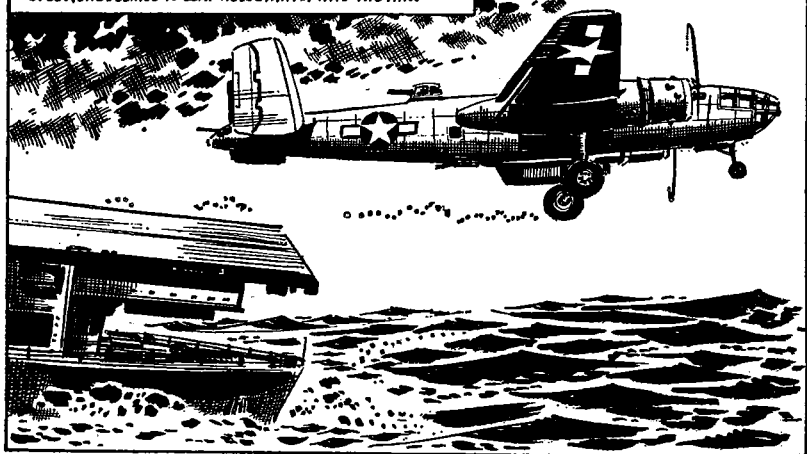
OKAY, JIMMY, BUT SPEED IT UP, TIME'S RUNNING SHORT, AND TAKE IT EASY, YOU OLD ROUGHNECK!



EVERY EYE WAS TRAINED ON THE POISED BOMBER. DOOLITTLE REALIZED THAT EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON A CLEAN TAKE OFF IN THE APALLING CONDITIONS. THE OTHERS HAD TO FOLLOW HIS LEAD. THE CARRIER TURNED INTO WIND...

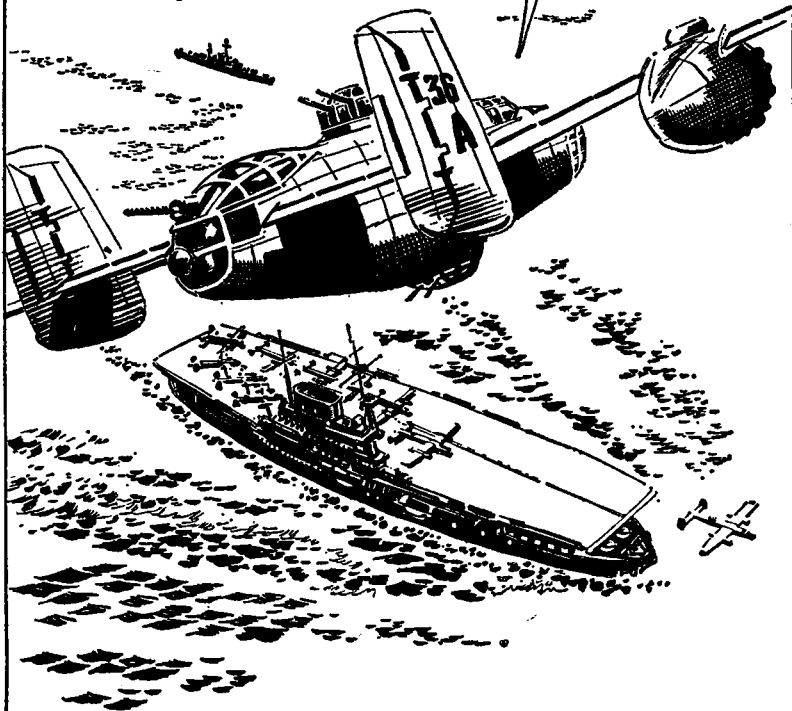


THE MASSIVE DECK PLUNGED DOWN INTO THE SEA AND THE BOMBER LUNGED FORWARD, GETTING SOME ASSISTANCE FROM THE DOWNWARD ATTITUDE OF THE CARRIER. RAPIDLY GATHERING SPEED, SHE SEEMED TO LEAP RELUCTANTLY INTO THE AIR.

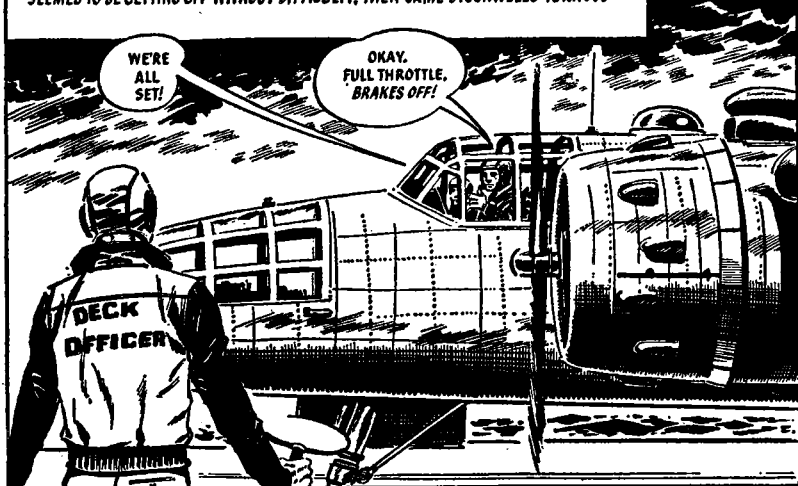


IT WAS A GREAT TAKE OFF WITH 100 FEET TO SPARE! DOOLITTLE HAD DONE IT!
ALMOST AS A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE AGAINST THE WEATHER, HE SWUNG INTO
A TIGHT TURN TO OBSERVE THE OTHERS...

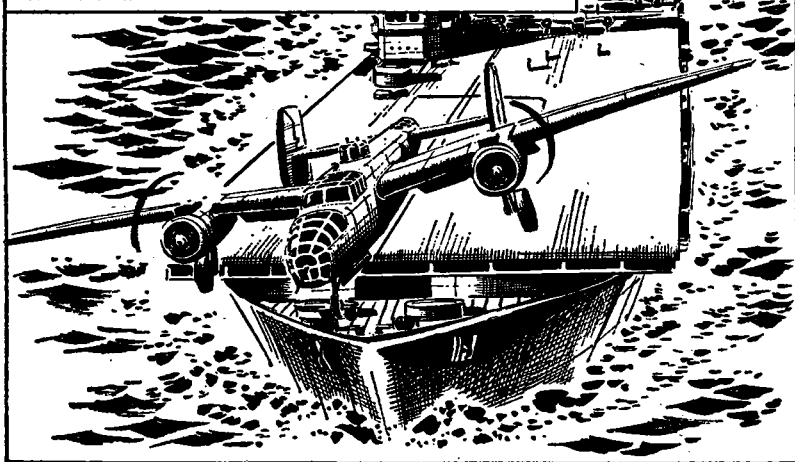
GREAT, GREAT!
THEY'RE DOIN' FINE.
LET'S STICK AROUND
FOR A MINUTE!



DOOLITTLE WENT INTO ORBIT AS 'PLANE AFTER 'PLANE CAME OFF THE DECK. EVERYBODY SEEMED TO BE GETTING OFF WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, THEN CAME STOCKWELL'S TURN...

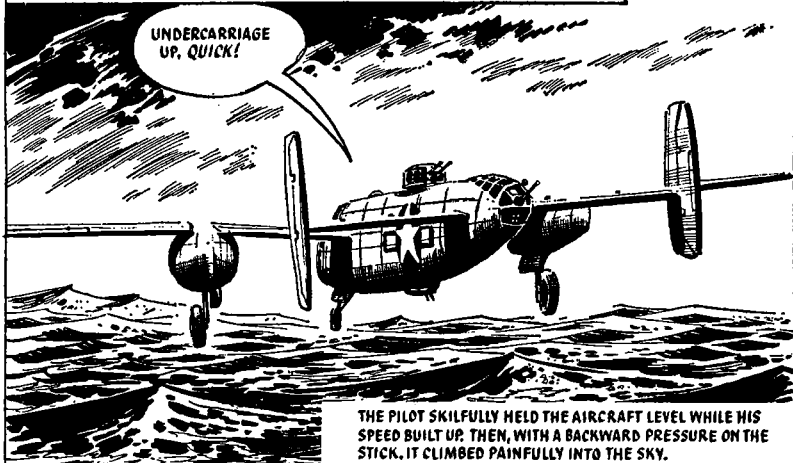


THE DECK WAS RISING, BUT SUDDENLY A MASSIVE WAVE STRUCK THE STERN. THE GREAT SHIP REELED, THE BOW SUDDENLY DROPPED AS THE BOMBER LEAPT INTO SPACE...



THE GREAT LOAD ROARED DANGEROUSLY TOWARD THE ANGRY SEA, BOTH ENGINES WORKING AT TOP LEVEL. THE PILOT COULD DO NOTHING MORE TO GET HER TO CLIMB. IT WAS UP TO THE BOMBER!

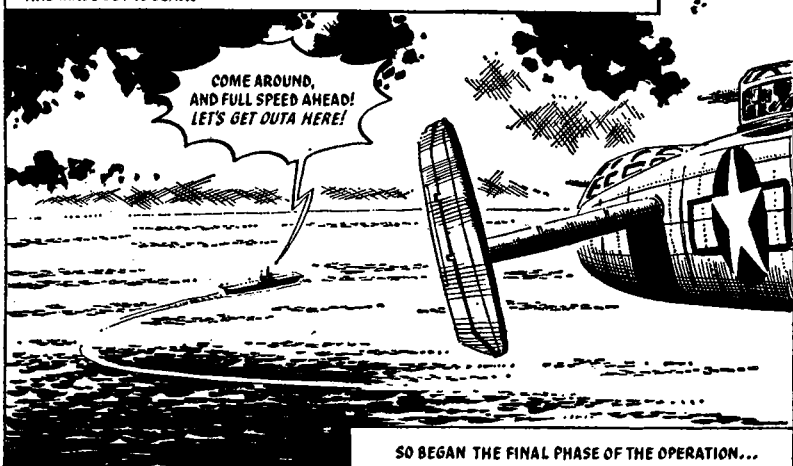
UNDERCARRIAGE
UP, QUICK!



THE PILOT SKILFULLY HELD THE AIRCRAFT LEVEL WHILE HIS SPEED BUILT UP. THEN, WITH A BACKWARD PRESSURE ON THE STICK, IT CLIMBED PAINFULLY INTO THE SKY.

SOON, ALL THE AIRCRAFT WERE IN THE AIR, AND DOOLITTLE WAS ALREADY HEADING FOR TOKYO. AS THE BOMBERS DROVE OUT OF SIGHT, THE 'HORNET' WENT INTO A TIGHT TURN AND MADE OUT TO SEA...

COME AROUND,
AND FULL SPEED AHEAD!
LET'S GET OUTA HERE!



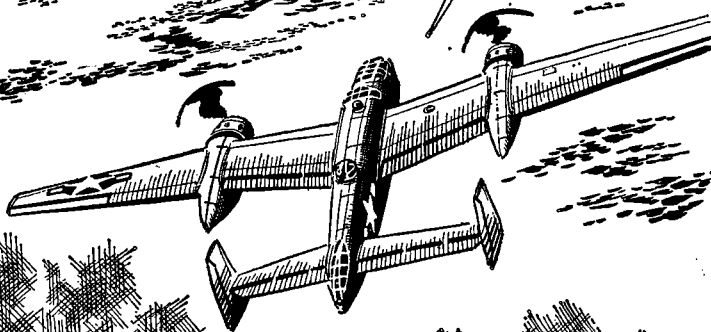
SO BEGAN THE FINAL PHASE OF THE OPERATION...

Chapter 5. CHINA COAST AHEAD

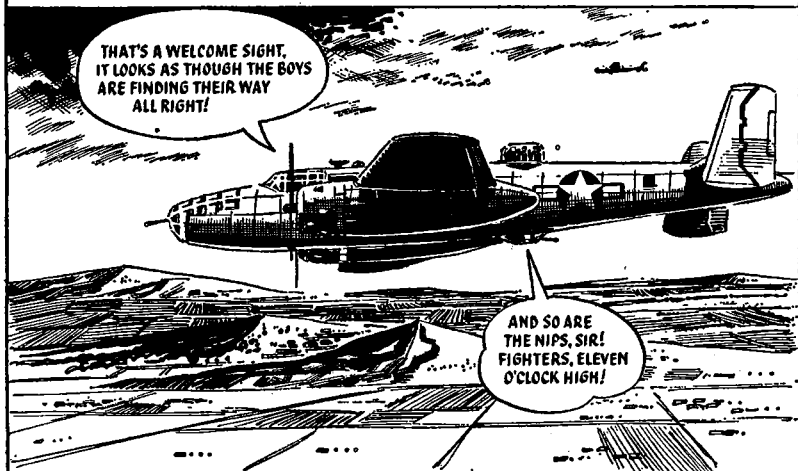
FLYING LOW DOWN, CLOSE TO THE WAVE TOPS TO AVOID DETECTION BY ENEMY RADAR, THE MITCHELLS MADE FOR THEIR TARGETS INDIVIDUALLY. THEY WERE ENCOUNTERING STRONG HEADWINDS WHICH WAS MAKING BIG DEMANDS ON THEIR PRECIOUS FUEL. ABOUT FIVE HOURS AFTER LEAVING THE 'HORNET', DOOLITTLE'S BOMBER WAS NEARING THE JAPANESE MAINLAND...

THERE SHE IS BOYS.
FIX US AS SOON AS
YOU CAN, NAVIGATOR.
ALL GUNNERS TAKE
STATIONS...

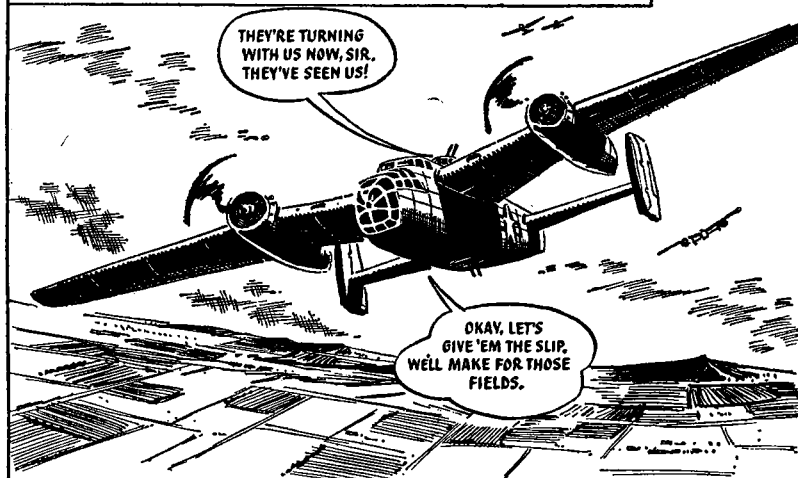
FROM THE LOOK
OF THAT BAY, I RECKON
WE'RE A LITTLE TO THE
NORTH OF OUR REQUIRED
LANDFALL POINT.



AS THE BOMBER CROSSED THE COAST-LINE, THE NAVIGATOR FIXED THE POSITION ACCURATELY, AND THEY WERE TOKYO BOUND! THEY WERE JOINED BY A SECOND BOMBER AS THEY APPROACHED THE TARGET AREA...



THIS WAS PROOF THAT THE JAPANESE WERE EXPECTING THEM, BUT HAD THE BOMBERS BEEN SPOTTED YET? DOOLITTLE KNEW HOW TO FIND OUT...



DOOLITTLE WAS TRYING TO USE THE GREEN OF THE FIELDS AS A BACKGROUND FOR HIS DRAB GREEN COLOURED BOMBER. THE FIGHTERS SUDDENLY SWOOPED DOWN, AND THE COLONEL'S MIND WORKED QUICKLY...

I'M MAKING FOR THOSE HILLS TO TRY AND LOSE THOSE FIGHTERS, GET READY FOR VIOLENT EVASIVE ACTION!



AS DOOLITTLE DODGED BEHIND THE HILL, THE FIGHTERS SCREAMED OVERHEAD. WITH THEIR GREATER SPEED THEY SWEEP FAR OUT INTO THE COUNTRY BEFORE THEY COULD TURN. WHEN THEY DID, THE BOMBER WAS GONE!

THAT ENDS THAT LITTLE PARTY, BUT LOOK WHAT I SEE AHEAD! GENTLEMEN WE HAVE ARRIVED AT TOKYO!



THE TEEMING INDUSTRIAL CITY LAY BEFORE THEM. THE NAVIGATOR HURRIEDLY SCANNED THE DETAILED MAP OF TOKYO AND DIRECTED DOOLITTLE TO THE MAIN TARGETS...

THAT DARK AREA
DEAD AHEAD IS THE
AIRCRAFT FACTORY.

I'VE GOT IT!
ALL GUNNERS KEEP
AN EYE ON THOSE FIGHTERS,
THEY HAVEN'T SEEN US YET!
... BOMB DOORS OPEN!

SECONDS LATER, THE BOMBER WAS FLYING OVER THE TARGET AT UNDER A THOUSAND FEET. BELOW, ASTONISHED FACES WERE TURNED SKYWARD. THE AIRCRAFT THEY SAW WAS UNFAMILIAR AND FOREIGN! CURIOSITY WAS SOON TO GIVE WAY TO TERROR...

BOMBS
AWAY!

DOOLITTLE'S BOMB AIMER HAD DELIVERED
THE FIRST ALLIED BLOW AGAINST JAPAN!

MEANWHILE, SOME MILES IN THE REAR, THE MARAUDING FIGHTERS HAD FOUND NEW TARGETS. MADISON AND STOCKWELL WERE FLYING WING TO WING IN THEIR BOMBERS. THEY WERE ABOUT TO GET THEIR FIRST TASTE OF WAR...

KEEP RIGHT,
FOR PETE'S SAKE.
YOU'RE CROWDING ME!
FIGHTERS COMING IN
AT FIVE O'CLOCK!

ROGER.
SEE YOU
LATER!

AS STOCKWELL'S BOMBER LURCHED OVER TO THE RIGHT THE JAPANESE ATTACKERS SCREAMED OVERHEAD, AND HIS UPPER GUNNER MANAGED TO GET A QUICK BURST IN...

I GOT ONE,
FOR PETE'S SAKE
I GOT ONE!

GOOD SHOOTING ART!
KEEP IT GOING!

THEIR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL!

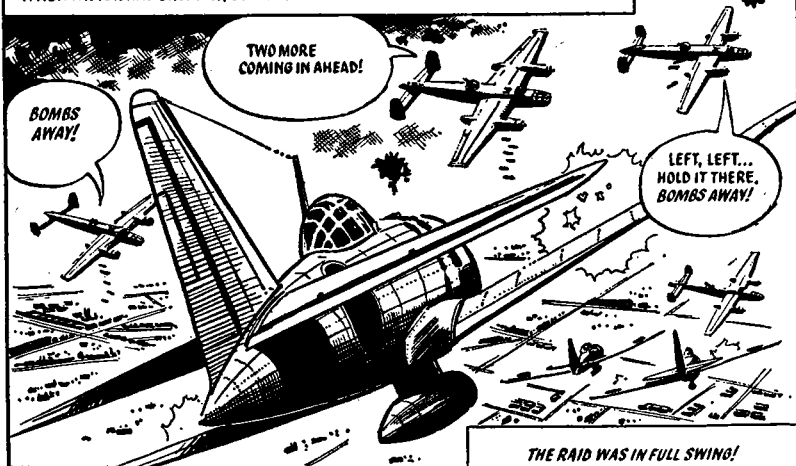
MINUTES LATER A BRIGHT GLOW FROM THE WEST TOLD THE BOMBER CREWS THAT DOOLITTLE HAD FOUND THE TARGET. THOSE WHO WERE HAVING NAVIGATION TROUBLES SAW IT AS A BEACON OF HOPE. THEY ALL CONVERGED ON TOKYO AT 1500 FEET...

BOMB DOORS
OPEN!

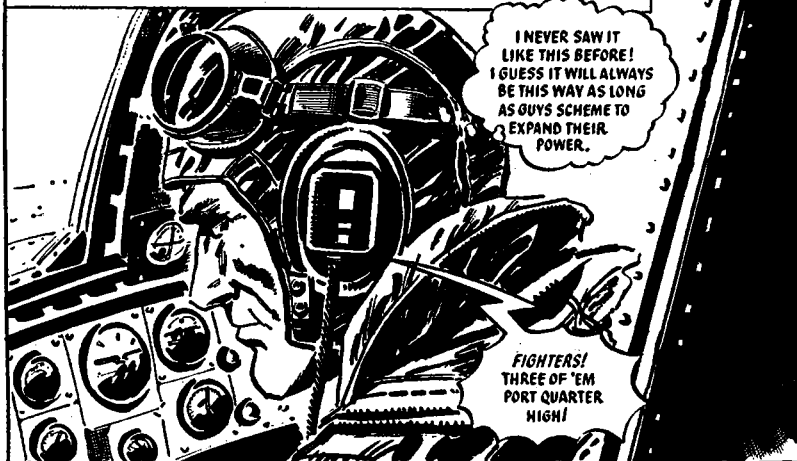
LOOK AT
THAT FLAK!

IT READS
LIKE A SIGN,
"DOOLITTLE
WAS HERE!"

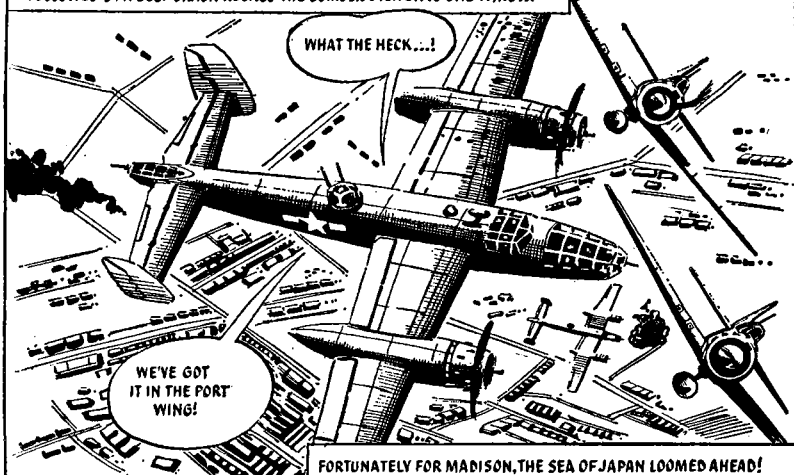
MADISON AND STOCKWELL WERE IN THE BUNCH, AND EXCITEMENT RAN HIGH. THEY THOUGHT OF THE TRAINING FLIGHTS WHEN ACCURACY WAS THE ONLY CONCERN. NOW A NEW FACTOR HAD CREPT IN, *SELF PRESERVATION!*



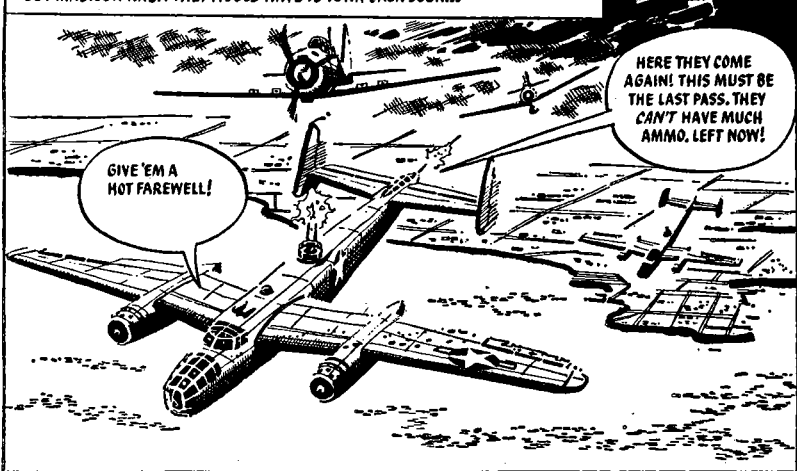
AS THE BOMBS STRUCK THE TARGETS BELOW, MADISON WAS AMAZED BY THEIR EFFECT. THE STARK REALITIES OF WAR DAWNED ON HIM. AT FIRST HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS TROUBLING HIM, AND THEN IT HIT HIM. THERE WERE PEOPLE DOWN THERE!



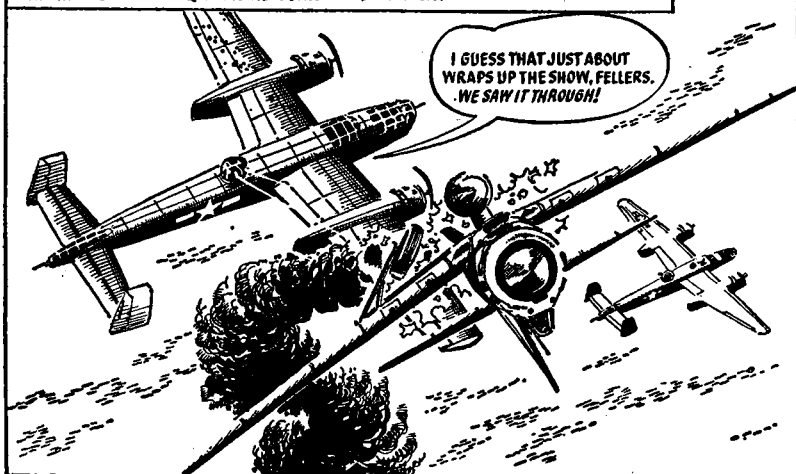
MADISON HAD A RUDE AWAKENING AS BULLETS RIPPED THROUGH THE METAL BEHIND HIS HEAD! ALMOST AT THE SAME INSTANT, A BRILLIANT FLASH, FOLLOWED BY A DEEP CRASH ROCKED THE BOMBER OVER ON TO ONE WING...



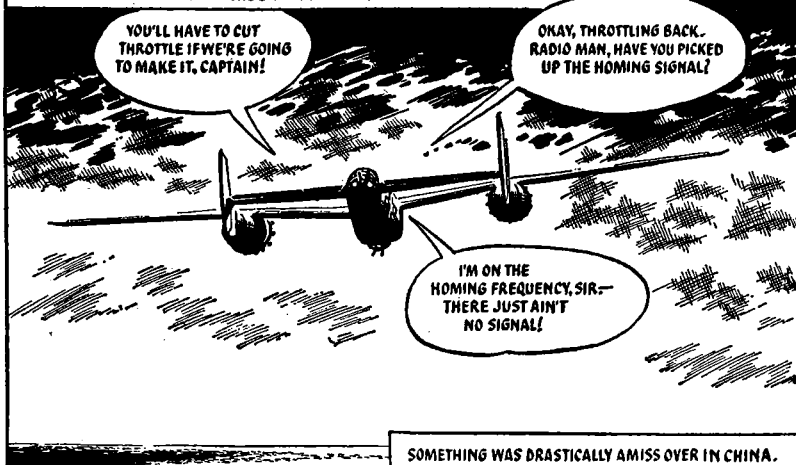
THEIR PORT AILERON WAS BADLY DAMAGED AND CONTROL WAS REDUCED, BUT THE MITCHELL SHOWED NO SIGN OF FALTERING. THE FIGHTERS WERE STILL IN PURSUIT, BUT MADISON KNEW THEY WOULD HAVE TO TURN BACK SOON...



THE ZEROS CAME IN AT FULL THROTTLE WITH ALL GUNS BLAZING. IT WAS THE LAST ROUND, AND AS THEY WENT BY, THEY ROLLED LAZILY THROUGH THE SKY IN A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE. THE TAIL GUNNER WAS QUICK TO RECOGNISE AN EASY KILL...



BUT THE SHOW WASN'T OVER. THE FUEL GAUGE WAS READING DANGEROUSLY LOW, AS IT WAS IN ALL THE BOMBERS SCATTERED OVER THE SEA OF JAPAN, NOW HEADING PONDEROUSLY FOR THE CHINA COAST...



SOMETHING WAS DRASTICALLY AMISS OVER IN CHINA.

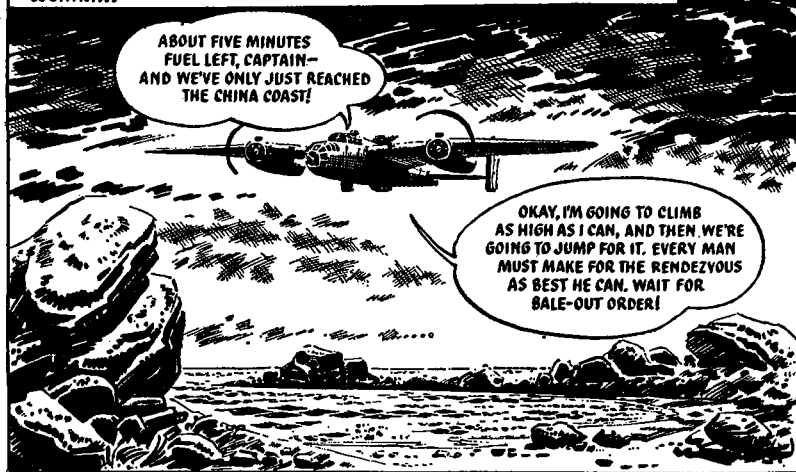
Chapter 6. THE LONG ROAD BACK

NIGHT WAS FALLING AS THE MITCHELLS GROPED THEIR WAY TOWARDS THE CHINA COAST. NOT A SINGLE AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN LOST OVER JAPAN — BUT THE ENEMY NOW WAS THE DWINDLING FUEL, BAD WEATHER, AND DARKNESS! BY THIS TIME, EVERYBODY HAD REALISED THAT THE HOMING SIGNALS JUST WERE NOT GOING OUT!





NOT FAR AWAY, LIEUTENANT STOCKWELL WAS HAVING SIMILAR THOUGHTS. HIS EVASIVE ACTION HAD TAKEN HIM WAY OFF TARGET AND HE HAD DROPPED HIS BOMBS IN THE COUNTRY...

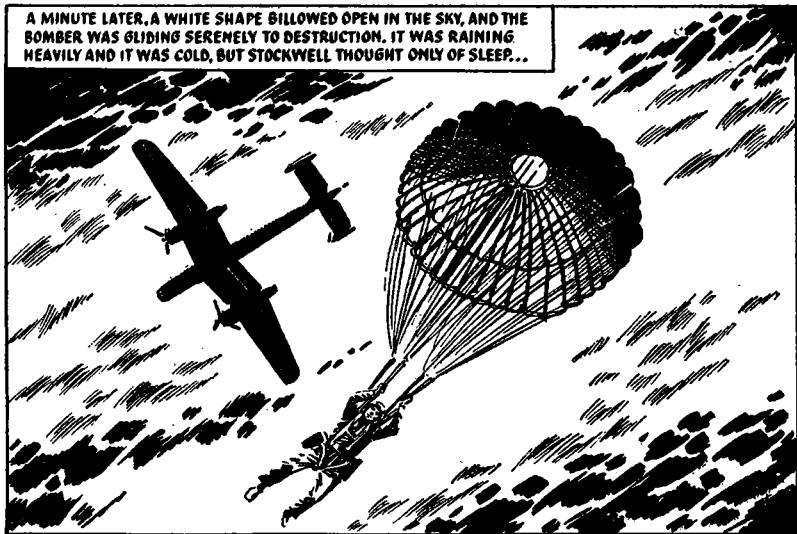


STOCKWELL JUST MANAGED TO MAKE 4000 FEET AND THE ENGINES CUT. CALMLY HE GAVE ORDERS TO HIS CREW TO GET OUT. SURPRISING HIMSELF WITH HIS COOL AND METHODICAL ROUTINE. HE PUT IT DOWN TO THE FACT THAT HE WAS TOO TIRED TO BE SCARED, BUT THIS WAS THE RESULT OF TRAINING!

BAKER EASY 'SKYBOLT'
CALLING CHU CHOW FIELD.
OUT OF FUEL, AM
ABANDONING SHIP.
50 MILES NORTH-EAST.
COME AND PICK US UP!

IF THE CHINESE HAD HEARD, THERE WAS NO REPLY!

A MINUTE LATER, A WHITE SHAPE BILLOWED OPEN IN THE SKY, AND THE BOMBER WAS GLIDING SERENELY TO DESTRUCTION. IT WAS RAINING HEAVILY AND IT WAS COLD, BUT STOCKWELL THOUGHT ONLY OF SLEEP...



DAWN FOUND OVER 60 AMERICAN AIRMEN SCATTERED ALL OVER THE MOUNTAINS AROUND CHU CHOW. THE LOCAL CHINESE PEASANTS HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXPECTED LANDINGS, AND AFTER SEVERAL BITTER YEARS OF WAR ALL STRANGERS WERE ENEMIES!



SILENT FIGURES MOVED OUT FROM THE COVER OF BUSHES AND FOLLOWED THE LITTLE GROUP. THE EXHAUSTED AIRMEN WERE AS YET UNAWARE OF THEIR PRESENCE...



SHUFFLING ALONG THE DUSTY MOUNTAIN ROAD WITH HEADS BOWED, THE AIRMEN SUDDENLY BECAME AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THEY WERE NOT ALONE!



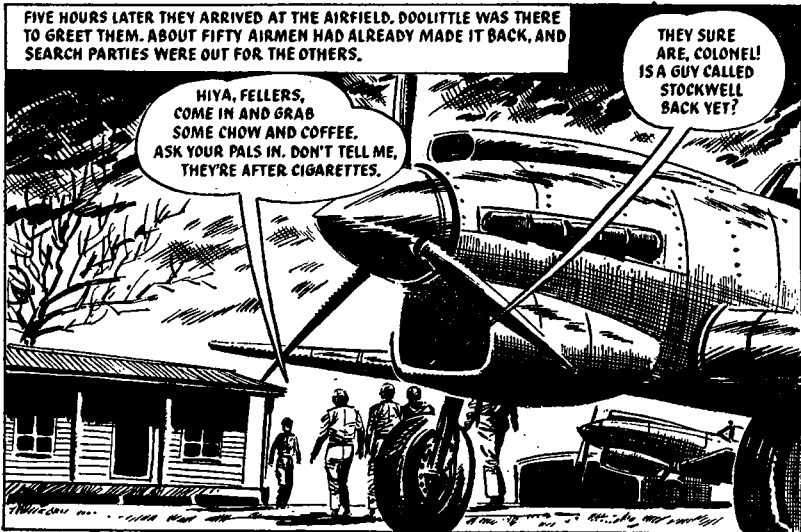
ALL OF THE AIRMEN HAD BEEN TAUGHT ENOUGH CHINESE TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES, BUT THE TOUGH LOOKING PEASANT BEFORE THEM WAS UTTERLY UNCONVINCED! HE CONFERRED WITH HIS COMRADES, AND A YOUNG MAN CAME FORWARD...

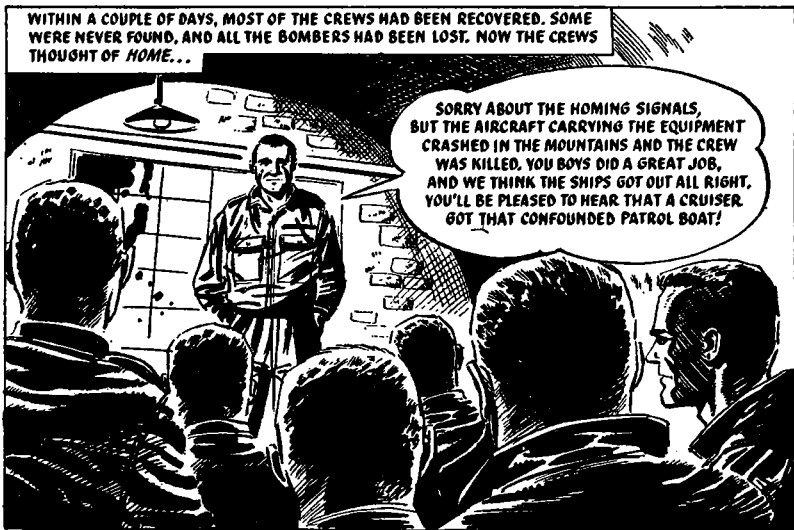


THINKING THAT IT MAY HELP A LITTLE, MADISON TOOK OUT THE REMAINS OF HIS RATION PACK, AND PASSED CIGARETTES, CHEESE AND CHOCOLATE AROUND. THE EFFECT WAS MAGNIFICENT...



FIVE HOURS LATER THEY ARRIVED AT THE AIRFIELD. DOOLITTLE WAS THERE TO GREET THEM. ABOUT FIFTY AIRMEN HAD ALREADY MADE IT BACK, AND SEARCH PARTIES WERE OUT FOR THE OTHERS.





A DAY LATER, THREE DAKOTA TRANSPORTS LANDED TO TAKE THE CREWS TO CHUNGKING, ON THE FIRST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE U.S.A...



BROTHER,
LOOK AT THE
APPROACH TO
THE RUNWAY!..!

THAT HILL
COULDN'T HAVE BEEN
IN A WORSE PLACE
IF THEY TRIED!

YEAH,
AND LOOK AT
THOSE BEATEN-UP
KITTYHAWKS!

TWO WEEKS LATER, AFTER A LOT OF FLYING, THE CREWS OF THE TOKYO RAID WERE BACK IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND WAITING FOR LEAVE. A POKER FACED CAPTAIN WAS UP FROM 17TH. MEDIUM BOMBER WING HEADQUARTERS ON 'OFFICIAL BUSINESS'...



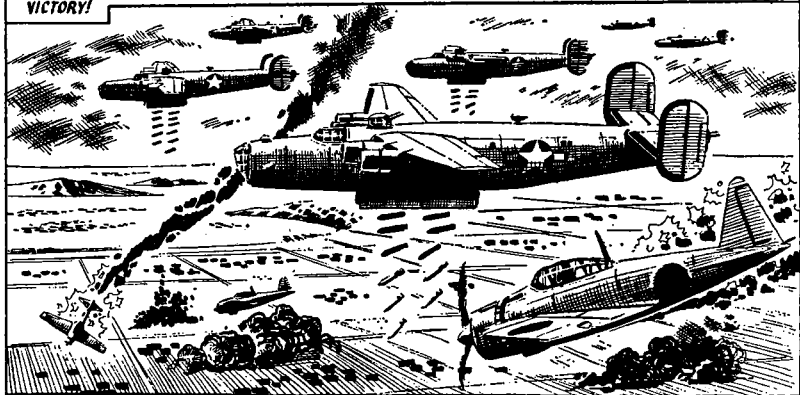
ALTHOUGH HE HAD SEVERAL EXCUSES FOR BEING IN SAN FRANCISCO AT THAT TIME, BOTH MADISON AND STOCKWELL KNEW THAT THE FATHERLY CAPTAIN ROSS HAD COME UP TO SEE IF THEY HAD RETURNED SAFELY.



CAPTAIN ROSS KNEW THAT COMBAT WOULD ALTER THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS TRAINING AND HE FELT RATHER PROUD AND WISE...



THE RAID HAD A DEMORALISING EFFECT UPON THE JAPANESE, EVEN THOUGH THE DAMAGE WAS NOT EXTENSIVE. IT HAD SHOWN THAT JAPAN COULD BE HIT BY AMERICAN BOMBERS, AND ITS EFFECTS ON ALLIED MORALE WERE HIGH. IT WAS THE FIRST OF A STRING OF AMERICAN VICTORIES, LIKE CORAL SEA, MIDWAY, THE PHILIPPINE SEA AND LEYTE GULF. THE AMERICANS WERE ON THE LONG ROAD BACK TO VICTORY!



Published each month by IPC Magazines Ltd., King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Printed by Fleetway Printers, Gravesend, Kent. Subscription facilities (inland and overseas) are not now available. Sole Agents: Australia and New Zealand, Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; South Africa, Central News Agency, Ltd. WAR PICTURE LIBRARY is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not without the written consent of the Publishers first given be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price shown on the cover, selling price in Eire subject to VAT; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

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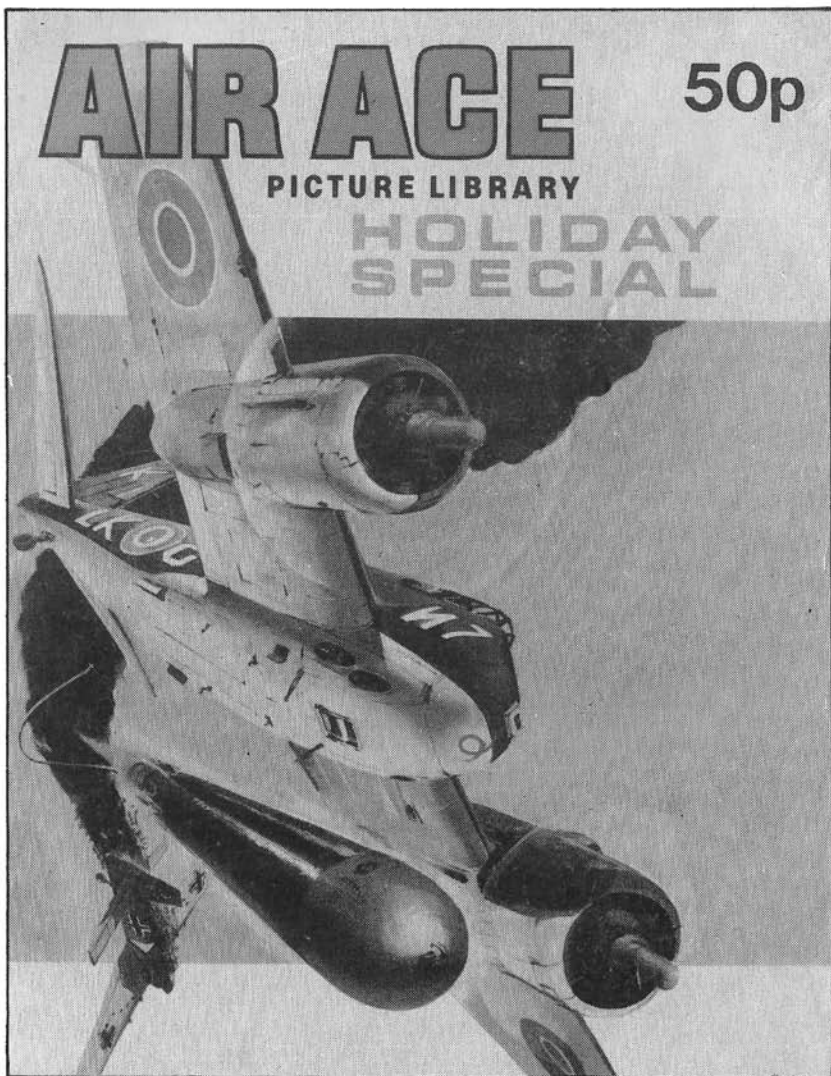
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